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RECENT OBSERVATIONS ON HAVASUPAI LAND TENURE[1]

ELMAN SERVICE

101 161 THE HAVASUPAI INDIANS are a closely knit, isolated band in northern Arizona which has numbered around 200-250 people for as long as we know of them. Dr Leslie Spier visited them in 1918, 1919 and 1921 and has 114 published a full description of their culture.[2] Geographic isolation has restricted 177 the disruptive effects of white acculturation, so that Spier's ethnography is still accurately descriptive of the Havasupai, except for the few modern changes to be discussed in this paper. Aside from my interpretations as to the meaning of these more recent data, I have added nothing which was not already discussed by Spier in his monograph.

311 423 The Havasupai live by intensive irrigation farming, and make full use of the approximately 100 acres of tillable land. They are, understandably, strongly attached to their land, and feel that they live in a beautiful oasis which is unique in the arid Grand Canyon region. The individual land holdings are of very small patches, which, because of the vagaries of inheritance, are widely scattered among the holdings of other individuals. There are no particular problems involved in the control and apportioning of water for the fields, as the creek which bisects their canyon supplies more than enough for everyone. Upkeep of the main irrigation ditches is a community affair, while the lateral ditches are kept up by the persons effected.

114 596 [613] The Havasupai have no clan system, nor do they even recognize lineages based on relationships beyond the grandparental generation. The conjugal unit and the patrilocal extended family are the chief social structures within the village, which now consists of 38 occupied camps. In an interesting paper called *A Suggested Origin for Gentile Organization*,[3] Spier pointed out the possibility of patrilineal gentes arising here should there occur (1) a greater emphasis in patrilineal inheritance, and (2) a greater regularity in patrilocal residence, which together might tend to bring a further extension of kinship recognition in [591] the father's line. At the time of his visits, the usual post-marital residence was temporarily matrilocal, followed in a year or two by patrilocality.

1 Read before Section H–Anthropology of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, December 27, 1946. The data were obtained during a visit to Supai, Arizona, in May, June, and July, 1946.

2 *Havasupai Ethnography* (Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 29, Part 3, 1928).

3 American Anthropologist, Vol. 24, pp. 487-499, 1922.

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the Havasupai, and that use, merit, and need are such important considerations in the allocation of land, are factors which tend to keep patrilineal succession rather far from being a strict rule. The small community size probably helps keep the conception of village rights strong, and the limited amount of tillable land likewise contributes to the amount of community interest in land disposal, for otherwise there would soon be landless couples, while other families would have more than necessary.

One further point made by Spier should probably be discussed in connection with community size. He had mentioned the possible influence of the small population in inhibiting the group consciousness of a larger consanguineal unit, but felt that this would be overcome by the tendency toward the reduction of the number of biological groups represented in the population.[12] Genealogies show that the blood groups are becoming reduced in number, as suggested, but the Havasupai still do not trace their lineages far enough to be aware of this. Lineages are not named, and even the use of the white man's type of surname has as yet had no effect in furthering the tracing of a patrilineal lineage beyond two or three generations, at the most. The "white name" is often changed, and a family may even have a name derived from an ancestral female. As an example of the tendency for a line to proliferate into new named families, three sons of a woman named Siyuidja founded three distinct families: the Siyuidja family, the Wescogame family, and the Watahomidja family. Therefore, I feel that the small population size continues to be of significance in inhibiting nucleation of the village.

My own data, collected twenty-six years after Spier's last visit, affirm, I believe, the essential validity of his analysis of an incipient clan system in Havasupai, and I add only that it appears to me that expansion of the population plus a corresponding increase of agricultural land are necessary ingredients before a unilinear lineage could become fully crystallized here, for only then would it be likely that a rule of patrilineal succession to familial lands could operate freely without interference from the strong conception of village rights which pertains at present.

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12 *A Suggested Origin for Gentile Organization*, p. 487.